

Reconsidering the origins of portraiture: instead of an introduction

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Figure 1 Martin Kober, *Portrait of Anne Jagiellon, Queen of Poland and grand duchess of Lithuania*, 1576, King Sigismund Chapel, Cracow Cathedral, photo: Wikimedia Commons

In 1586, Anne Jagiellon, queen regnant of Poland and grand duchess of Lithuania, the last Polish ruler of the Jagiellon dynasty, sent her portrait in coronation robes from Warsaw to Cracow Cathedral (fig. 1). The portrait was painted shortly after the coronation ceremony and her marriage to Stephen Bathory in the Cracow Cathedral (1st May 1576) and shows the queen full-length, wearing a crown and holding a sceptre and orb in her hands. Anne is presented here in the full splendour of her royal status: she wears a white dress adorned with bands of golden embroidery with jewels sewn in, and around her neck are a costly pendant and chains made of gold and pearls. The queen's presence, however, is underscored not only through the rendering of the coronation insignia and an emphasis on rich clothing but also through the faithfully depicted countenance that reveals the austere features of her actual appearance. Although the portrait was undoubtedly created with

representational purposes, in Cracow its function had been changed. According to the queen's instructions, the portrait was to be complemented on site with her coats of arms and an inscription signalling the identity of the sitter and the dignities held by her, and subsequently installed in the Jagiellons' chantry chapel, 'on the side of the altar where we used to kneel down, as this seems to us to be the best place for this purpose'. The likeness, displayed in a prominent location within the chapel, probably to the right of the altar, was meant therefore not only to commemorate the elderly queen in the burial place of Sigismund I the Old and Sigismund II Augustus, her father and brother respectively, and at the same time her predecessors on the thrones of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, but also to remotely re-present her person, to make her present in her physical absence. Further, the queen ordered that, 'The portrait should always be well covered, so that nobody would bow down before it, and it should never be unveiled, unless someone strongly insisted on seeing it'.¹ At the time when the likeness of Anne Jagiellon was made, the portrait had already been a fully developed artistic genre, with an at least 200-year-old tradition of production and use. Yet, the queen's words suggested that the attitude towards the portrait in the sixteenth century was still far from unequivocal. She seemed to appreciate the advantages of having been portrayed and considered the depiction of her person as a useful form of re-presentation, but, in spite of that, she ordered her likeness to be covered, as if renouncing the quality that seems to be the very essence of portraiture. In the eyes of the queen – as in many of her contemporaries – having his or her likeness depicted in a painting during an individual's lifetime, was as much a manifestation of that fascinating magical force of the portrait that – using the words of Leon Battista Alberti – 'makes the dead seem almost alive' and 'absent men present', as a sign of vainglory and mundane vanity of the person portrayed. Mimetic likeness, customarily considered to be the fundamental quality of portraiture, was in this case carefully disguised, as the patron did not want to immortalize her image, but rather to preserve the memory of her in the interior of the chantry chapel. The likeness depicted in the painting is here not an end in itself, but merely a means to this end, by which the representation of a person is realized.

The above account challenges the commonly accepted view of a portrait according to which this genre is considered simply a reproduction of a sitter's real facial features. It informs about the complexity of early modern portraiture in which such notions as likeness and type, presence and absence, identity and individuality constantly intermingle leaving a consistent definition of this genre highly problematic. In this introductory essay we would like to reflect on how these notions were thematized in portraiture in the period of its decisive transformation in the later Middle Ages, that is, in a time when copying the outward appearance of

¹ Jerzy Mycielski, *Portrety polskie* [Polish portraits], Lvov, 1911, letter of the queen, written in Warsaw on 22 March 1586, to the warden of the royal chapel, see Janina Ruszczyćówna, 'Portret renesansowy i barokowy na Mazowszu' [The Renaissance and Baroque portrait in Masovia], *Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie*, 8, 1964, 174–175. In the mid-seventeenth century the portrait was hung, together with another portrait of Anne and a portrait of Sigismund I, above the grille closing the entrance to the chapel, where it has been ever since.

the sitter, after a long period of being considered unimportant or even undesirable, started to be appreciated again as a significant component of portraiture. In doing so, we do not stake out a claim to discuss exhaustively all issues related to this subject, but rather, to outline several crucial phenomena that in light of recent scholarship occur to us to be particularly important. Further, we would like to discuss these issues based on Central European examples and thus stress their relevance to the development of Early Modern Portraiture.

Portraiture and the individual

In general understanding, a portrait is a specific form of an image – one that is able to reveal individual qualities of the sitter by means of his or her painstakingly rendered facial features. Yet, this exceptional position was accorded to the portrait only at the end of the nineteenth century. Important here was not only the authority of the realistic likeness which, when appropriately characterized, was supposed to be an expression of the sitter's social and political status (a feature that applied in no lesser extent to rulers and aristocrats than to the representatives of the new elites: intellectuals, artists and members of the bourgeoisie), but also the modern concept of individuality considered to be a subjective value, released from the social, religious or political relationships.² Importantly, this concept has been identified with the Renaissance, an epoch generally believed to be the period when the foundations of modernity were laid and the discovery of an individual took place.³ Jacob Burckhardt in his book *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860), a work that was fundamental for the above idea, wrote: '[A]t the close of the thirteenth century Italy began to swarm with individuality; the charm laid upon human personality was dissolved; and a thousand figures meet us each in his own special shape and dress'.⁴ Burckhardt saw Renaissance Italy as the cradle of modern civilization created by the arduous process of discovering one's own self. As a result of historical development, the medieval society – collectivized and adhering to universal norms, deprived of self-knowledge and consequently primitive – was, according to Burckhardt, transformed into a 'modern' society, in which the self-

² See Joanna Woodall, 'Introduction: Facing the Subject', in: Joanna Woodall, ed., *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997, 1–25, esp. 5–16.

³ See Stephen Perkinson, *The Likeness of the King. A prehistory of portraiture in Late Medieval France*, Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press 2009; Valentin Groebner, *Who Are You? Identification, Deception, and Surveillance in Early Modern Europe*, New York: Zone Books, 2007, 24–25.

⁴ 'Mit Ausgang des 13. Jahrhunderts aber beginnt Italien von Persönlichkeiten zu wimmeln; der Bahn, welcher auf dem Individualismus gelegen, ist hier völlig gebrochen; schrankenlos spezialisieren sich tausend einzelne Gesichter', Jacob Burckhardt, *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien. Ein Versuch, in der Textfassung der Erstausgabe*, Frankfurt am Main: Büchergilde Gutenberg, 1956, 67. For an English translation, see Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. S. G. C. Middlemore, 1878 (Project Gutenberg Etext #2074, available online at: <<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/2074>>; accessed on 6 Oct. 2016), 129–130.

aware and unique individual was able to define his or her own self regardless of religious and political standards. This concept was, in fact, a retrograde projection of the understanding of individuality that was current in Burckhardt's time – the period of industrial revolution – and reflected the point of view of the new urban elites whose members no longer owed their status to lineage, but to industrialization and the symbolic deposition of the old aristocracy in the French Revolution.⁵ The vision of modernity formed in this way has grown to be a sort of norm and objective that history strove to achieve. It has become a research paradigm that conditioned the enquiries of a few generations of historians and art historians. All manifestations of self-knowledge that could be seen in the late Middle Ages, such as biographic or autobiographic side notes in books and chronicles, literary forms of humanist self-creation etc., were compared to autobiography and diaries in their modern understanding, and accordingly were considered to be harbingers of modern human self-knowledge. Similarly understood were also the early forms of portraiture. Its 'invention' was thought to be the symptom of the historical process of the birth of an individual, into which numerous other seminal 'beginnings', such as the discovery of America, the emergence of modern statehood, capitalism or the bourgeois society, and in the realm of literature – of autobiography – were inscribed.⁶

Tellingly, Burckhardt himself never unequivocally associated the realistic rendering of an individual with the phenomena of Renaissance individualization of man he argued for.⁷ In a separate essay from 1885, devoted to the beginnings of 'a new portrait painting', a criterion that was more important than a mere physical likeness was 'a portrait specially commissioned for private ownership' which, as if by a magical spell, appeared at the beginning of the fifteenth century.⁸ In Burckhardt's view, the art of portraiture was discovered not by Italian artists, but by Netherlandish painters whose art reveals the 'full individualization of man', never seen before. However, regardless of where the groundbreaking point of the 'invention' of portraiture was located, the dividing line was clear: in the Middle Ages, in the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, 'portrait likeness' did happen, but was exceptional. The strength and commitment to depict 'the whole truth of life' came only later, 'by way of a mysterious power, which simultaneously captured Florentine art as the first in Italy and Netherlandish art as the first in the

⁵ See Woodall, 'Introduction', 15.

⁶ See Eva Schlotheuber, 'Norm und Innerlichkeit. Zur problematischen Suche nach den Anfängen der Individualität', *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, 31, 2004, 332–333.

⁷ The Swiss scholar was aware of the fact that physiognomic individualisation on works of art outpaced the Renaissance 'birth' of an individual by several hundred years; see Jacob Burckhardt, 'Die Anfänge der neuern Porträtmalerei' [1885], in: idem, *Kulturgeschichtliche Vorträge*, Leipzig, 1930, 209–214; see also Peter Seiler, *Giotto als Erfinder des Porträts*, in: Martin Büchsel, Peter Schmidt, eds, *Das Porträt vor der Erfindung des Porträts*, Mainz: Philipp von Zabern Verlag, 2003, 153–172.

⁸ 'Was dagegen noch im ganzen 14. Jahrhundert, im Süden wie im Norden fehlt, ist das einzeln für den Privatbesitz bestellte gemalte Bildnis', Burckhardt, 'Die Anfänge', 214.

North'.⁹ Nevertheless, until the end of the fourteenth century 'one witnessed an epoch in which the awareness of the status and social group to which the sitter belonged was still more important than its individuality'.¹⁰ No wonder, then, that at the beginning of the twentieth century the contention that the portrait as an artistic genre originated in the Renaissance, was widespread. In his extensive dissertation on the portrait in German art before Albrecht Dürer, published in 1900, Alfred Lehmann repeated almost word by word the theses of the Swiss scholar, admitting that the Middle Ages were unaware of the term individuality. 'It was not until man started to consider himself a unique object worthy of study, that he began attempts to form others in his likeness, and was happy with a symbolic or conventionally-typified representations of his contemporaries'.¹¹ According to Lehmann, the perception of man as a special form of existence (*Sonderexistenz*) cropped up in various times and places, but it was only at the beginning of the fifteenth century that it emerged as a broader phenomenon which became a necessary basis for the formation of the portrait.¹² Early instances of interest in nature or man's individual likeness were treated in isolation, timid indications of human self-knowledge, while the Middle Ages were considered an epoch of the symbol, convention and type. It was only in the Renaissance that conditions necessary for the formation of the portrait as an autonomous artistic genre were created.¹³

As Joanna Woodall reminds us, the understanding of the portrait was for a fairly long period based on a distinction between object and subject, the objective and the subjective. Getting to know what one was really like (the sitter as a subject) was thought to be possible thanks to the existence of faithful likenesses which preserved the actual image of the person (the sitter as an object). The thus perceived painting was treated as an inanimate entity that relayed objective truth, giving insight into the nature of an individual considered as a being that was subjective and fully autonomous in relation to political, social and other similar norms.¹⁴ Yet, written sources from the Middle Ages and Early Modern period seem to challenge

⁹ 'Durch eine geheimnisvolle Strömung, welche in Italien zuerst die florentinische, im Norden zuerst die flandrische Kunst gleichzeitig ergriff, kam damals die Kraft und der Wille empor, die ganze Lebenswahrheit darzustellen', Burckhardt, 'Die Anfänge', 212–214.

¹⁰ 'Übersieht man aber die gewaltige Anzahl von Sarkophagstatuen, Reliefgestalten und Contourgrabplatten in Stein und Erz, welche aus dem 12., 13. und 14. Jahrhundert auf uns gekommen sind, und zwar in der Kirchen des ganzen Occidentes, so drängt sich bald die Überzeugung auf, daß die Porträtähnlichkeit des Kopfes die Ausnahme, ja bis tief ins 14. Jahrhundert eine seltene Ausnahme ist. [...] Ferner hat man es mit einer Zeit zu tun, da das Bewußtsein des Standes, der sozialen Gruppe, zu welcher der einzelne gehörte, beinahe noch wichtiger war als seine Individualität', Burckhardt, 'Die Anfänge', 211–212.

¹¹ Alfred Lehmann, *Das Bildnis bei den Altdeutschen Meistern bis auf Dürer*, Leipzig: Hiersemann, 1900, 53.

¹² Lehmann, *Das Bildnis*, 55–56.

¹³ See, e.g., Wilhelm Waetzoldt, *Die Kunst des Porträts*, Leipzig: F. Hirt & Sohn, 1908, 77–80; Alfred Peltzer, *Über die Porträtmalerei*, Esslingen: Paul Neff Verlag, 1910, 8–9; Karl Scheffer, *Bildnisse aus drei Jahrhunderten. Der alten deutschen und niederländischen Malerei*, Königstein in Taunus and Leipzig: Langewiesche, 1916, XII–XIII.

¹⁴ Woodall, 'Introduction', 14–15.

this theory. A good example appears as early as the thirteenth-century in a sermon of the German preacher Berthold of Regensburg, entitled *Of the Five Talents*, in which he reminds that at the Last Judgement everyone will have to account for the gifts bestowed on him by God.¹⁵ The author, elaborating on the Gospel parable, enumerates five talents: 'our own person' (*unser eigen lîp, unser eigeniu persône*), 'your service' (*dîn amt*), 'your time' (*dîn zît*), 'your earthly goods' (*dîn irdentisch guot*) and '[the love of] your neighbour' (*dîn naehster*). The most important is the first talent, 'our own person' that God created in his own image and likeness and graced with a free will. The second talent is 'service', 'vocation': every man has a certain function in society and is obliged by certain duties. People are considered here not as masses associated with a particular social stratum, but as individuals with free will and a particular social function to fulfil. From this vision result the following gifts: time that we were given to orderly carry out our duties, and the earthly goods which we should put to good use in order to satisfy our needs. And finally, the fifth gift: your neighbour whom we should love as ourselves.¹⁶ An individual is shown here not in opposition to a group; on the contrary: the identity of an individual is asserted by his association with a particular social class (e.g. knights, clergy or burghers) or corporation (e.g. a guild), and above all, with some smaller professional groups that define the individual's function within the society.

The above-mentioned sermon exemplifies the similar understanding of man as that expressed earlier already by Bernard of Clairvaux and Hugh of St Victor, among others, who considered man as an indivisible whole made up of spirit and body. The individual body, although mortal, will be revived at the Last Judgement, and therefore it is not a prison of the soul, but rather its complement. In the body, the spiritual beauty of man is reflected and thanks to it we have an insight into this beauty. Stephen Jaeger has demonstrated that as early as at the end of the tenth century cathedral schools in the Holy Roman Empire adopted a characteristic educational method, in which much store was set not only in the study of theological and philosophical writings, but also in an appropriate appearance and behaviour. A discipline of the body was introduced in order to integrate the 'inner' and 'outer man'.¹⁷ In his *De institutione novitiorum* Hugh of St Victor warns against the 'monster of gesticulation' and, out of his concern to the proper upbringing of novices, creates an entire catalogue of proper and improper gestures.¹⁸ His aim was

¹⁵ Berthold von Regensburg, *Vollständige Ausgabe seiner Predigten*, Franz Pfeiffer, ed., vol. 1-2, Wien 1862-1880, see Aron Gurewich, *The Origins of European Individualism*, transl. K. Judelson, Oxford: Blackwell, 161-179. see also Aaron Gurevich, 'The Merchant', in: Jacques Le Goff, ed., *Medieval Callings*, Chicago, 1996 (2nd edn), 243-283 (here 255-256).

¹⁶ Berthold von Regensburg, *Vollständige Ausgabe*, no. 23; Gurewich, *The Origins*, 177, see also Gurevich, 'The Merchant', 243-283 (here 256).

¹⁷ C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950-1200*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994; Thomas A. Dale, 'Romanesque Sculpted Portraits: Convention, Vision, and Real Presence', *Gesta*, 46, 2007, no. 2, 105.

¹⁸ Jean-Claude Schmitt, *La raison des gestes dans l'Occident medieval*, Paris: Gallimard, 1990, 173-205; Jean-Claude Schmitt, 'The rationale of gestures in the West: third to thirteenth

discipline understood as 'a good and honest presence in society, for which it is not enough not to do evil; it also requires, as far as well-done actions are concerned, that they be irreproachable in every detail. Discipline is an orderly movement of all limbs of the body, a disposition proper to every attitude and action'.¹⁹ Thus defined discipline is 'useful and essential' for Salvation. This usefulness, in the words of Jean-Claude Schmitt – 'follows from the dialectic of the inner and the outer. The outside movements of the body are an indication of the workings of the inner soul (*mentis motus*) and vice versa. The discipline of the body and its limbs "suppresses disorderly movements of the soul and forbidden appetites" and it "consolidates the soul in perseverance"'.²⁰ The development of the discipline of gestures by later theologians and moralists was a manifestation of a phenomenon that Caroline Walker-Bynum called a 'psychosomatic soul', that is, thinking about the soul in bodily categories as well as perceiving the body and corporeality in the context of universal Redemption theology.²¹ Importantly, these ideas were influenced not only by the theological thought derived from monastic, pre-scholastic, and scholastic writings, but also medical science that started to become widespread in Europe thanks to Latin treatises and their early translations into national languages. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the West adopted the ancient humoral theory which held that there were four cardinal humours – chief fluids – in the human body: blood, yellow bile, black bile and phlegm, and their relative proportions in the body determined the four main temperaments (sanguine, choleric, melancholic and phlegmatic). Although in antiquity this theory was mainly applied to treating diseases (at that time temperaments were not assigned to one particular type of personality, but were considered to be conditions that appeared and disappeared depending on the weather, astrological situation, season etc.), in the Middle Ages it was assumed that a given temperament determines, to a certain degree, every individual.²² As observed by Harald Derschka, 'such a new interpretation of the science of temperaments implies the conviction that man possesses certain immutable traits of character that distinguish him from other people, that is, that he has a personality'.²³ New possibilities for self-knowledge were opened: an

centuries', in: *A Cultural History of Gesture from Antiquity to the Present*, Jan Bremmer, Herman Roodenburg, eds, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993, 59–70 (here 67).

¹⁹ 'Quid sit disciplina et quantum valeat? Disciplina est conversatio bona et honesta, cui parum est mala non facere, sed studet etiam in iis quae bene agit cuncta irreprehensibilis apparere. Item disciplina est membrorum omnium motus ordinatus et dispositio decens in omni habitu et actione', *De institutione novitiorum* PL 176, Cap. X, col. 935B, see Schmitt, *La raison des gestes*, 175.

²⁰ Schmitt, *La raison des gestes*, 176.

²¹ Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, 156–199.

²² See Harald Derschka, *Die Viersäftelehre als Persönlichkeitstheorie. Zur Weiterentwicklung eines antiken Konzepts im 12. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart: Thorbecke, 2013; Harald Derschka, *Individuum und Persönlichkeit im Hochmittelalter*, Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 2014, 177–200.

²³ Derschka, *Individuum*, 178: 'Dies Neufassung der Temperamentenlehre impliziert also die Vorstellung, dass ein Mensch stabile Wesenszüge besitzt, die ihn von anderen Menschen unterscheiden, mithin dass er eine Persönlichkeit hat'.

individual road to Salvation was determined not only by the social status, function and association with a given professional group, but also by the inborn disposition of character. It is no accident that at the same time there increased an interest in the face which started to be considered as 'a window to the soul' that allowed to identify the individual character of man, his virtues and vices. In the eleventh century, an otherwise unknown Walther, sent to Marbode, bishop of Rennes (d. 1123), a copy of a late-antique treatise *De Physiognomia*, compiled around 400 AD, informing him that the work gave 'insight into the secrets of nature' and allowed to determine the inner properties of man depending on his figure, bearing, facial expression and so on.²⁴ Starting from the thirteenth century, the art of physiognomics had been widely known and appreciated, not so much among the intellectuals, but above all in the lay courtly circles. The most important work dealing with this art was the text known as *Secretum secretorum*, ascribed incorrectly to Aristotle. It has the form of three letters, allegedly written by the Stagiryte to Alexander the Great, in which the experienced sage gives the young monarch all kinds of advice that might be useful for his rule and for the choice of advisers.²⁵ In the fourteenth century, despite fears that the principles of physiognomics might be used improperly, manuscripts of *Secretum secretorum* became the staple of almost every court library holdings. It featured in the collections of the kings of England, Edward III and Edward IV, as well as that of Hungary, Louis of Anjou, or his mother, Elizabeth. There also survives an illustrated copy of the treatise from the collection of Jean, Duke de Berry.²⁶

The principle of mutual similarity

The popularity of physiognomical texts and medical treatises based on humoral theory in the High and Late Middle Ages testifies to the increasing interest in man, not only in the theological or eschatological, but also in the corporeal, biological dimensions. The extension of the spectrum of categories against which the problem of man's individuality was considered – to cover also his psychical and physical predispositions dependent not that much on God, but rather on the rules governing the world created by Him – was reflected also in contemporary forms of representation. Willibald Sauerländer pointed out an interesting correspondence

²⁴ See *Scriptores Physiognomonici Graeci et Latini*, rec. Richardus Foerster, I-II, Lipsiae 1893, CXLVI–CLII; see also Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*, 116; Derschka, *Individuum*, 230.

²⁵ For Latin editions of texts on physiognomics which were popular in the Middle Ages, see e.g. *Scriptores Physiognomonici* and Roger Bacon, *Secretum Secretorum cum glossis et notulis* (*Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Baconi*, V), Robert Steele, ed., Oxford 1920; see also Charles B. Schmitt, Dilwyn Knox, *Pseudo-Aristoteles Latinus. A guide to Latin Works falsely attributed to Aristotle before 1500*, London: Warburg Institute, 1985.

²⁶ See Otto Pächt, 'A Forgotten Manuscript from the Library of the Duc de Berry', *Burlington Magazine*, 98, 1959, 146–153; see also Hillary M. Carey, *Courting Disaster: Astrology, at the English Court and University in the Later Middle Ages*, London: McMillan, 1992, 34–35; Benedek Láng, *Unlocked Books. Manuscripts of Learned Magic in the Medieval Libraries of Central Europe*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008, 231.

between the art of physiognomy, popularized in the thirteenth century, and the enthusiasm of artists who reproduced individual facial features in the forms of masks on brackets decorating the choir of the cathedral in Reims, or Africans appearing in the cathedrals of Rouen and Chartres, among others, as well as the drastically characterized physiognomies of the aliens and infidels, that is Tartars and Jews, that can be found in numerous examples of illuminated manuscripts.²⁷ In none of these instances, however, can we speak of portraiture. Individualized facial features do not appear in the images of living individuals, nor in the representations of rulers and saints, but rather in representations of people from lower social ranks or such who held a marginal place in society. The grimacing faces on the brackets at Reims appear as a fascinating laboratory of physiognomic and pathognomic experimentation; the faces of Africans represent exotic slave-servants or Saracens (the Queen of Sheba, though described in the Bible as black, in Chartres does not display any characteristics of her race), whereas the Semitic faces with curved noses distinguish henchmen at Christ's Passion.

The thirteenth and early fourteenth-century tomb monuments with faithful reproductions of the deceased, such as, for example, the tomb sculptures of Boniface IV in Viterbo (d. 1268), Boniface VIII in Rome (d. 1303) or Enrico Scrovegni in Padua (d. 1336) seem to be the exceptions that proves the rule. Their development, as Dominic Olariu has recently pointed out, should be understood against the background of a new understanding of man as the 'image of God' brought in this time into theology by Scholastic thought.²⁸ The body, according to this theory, was

²⁷ See Willibald Sauerländer, 'Phisionomia est doctrina salutis. Über Physiognomik und Porträt im Jahrhundert Ludwigs des Heiligen', in: Martin Büchsel, Peter Schmidt, eds, *Das Porträt vor der Erfindung des Porträts*, Mainz: Philipp von Zabern Verlag, 2003, 101–121, esp. 103–109; Willibald Sauerländer, *The Fate of the Face in Medieval Art*, in: *Set in Stone. The Face in Medieval Sculpture*, exh. cat., Charles T. Little, ed., New Haven-London: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2007, 10–14; see Roland Recht, *Le portrait et le principe de réalité dans la sculpture: Philippe le Bel et l'image royale*, in: *Europäische Kunst um 1300* (Akten des XXV. Internationalen Kongresses für Kunstgeschichte, Wien 4.-10. September 1983), Gerhard Schmidt, ed., Wien-Köln-Graz: Böhlau Verlag, 1986, 189–201; Büchsel 2003, 123–140; Martin Büchsel, *Nur der Tyrann hat sein eigenes Gesicht. Königsbilder im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert in Frankreich und Deutschland*, in: Martin Büchsel, Peter Schmidt, eds, *Das Porträt vor der Erfindung des Porträts*, Mainz: Philipp von Zabern Verlag, 2003, 123–140, as well as publications dealing with the representation of Africans in the Middle Ages: Gude Suckale-Redlefsen, *Mauritius: Der Heilige Mohr/The Black Saint Maurice*, unter Mitarbeit von Robert Suckale, Houston-München-Zürich: Menil Foundation 1986; Gude Suckale-Redlefsen, 'Schwarze in der Kunst Böhmens unter den Luxemburgern', in: Jiří Fajt, Andrea Langer, eds, *Kunst als Herrschaftsinstrument. Böhmen und das Heilige Römische Reich unter den Luxemburgern im Europäischen Kontext*, Berlin-München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2009, 328–345; Gude Suckale-Redlefsen, 'Der Schwarze Ritter von Magdeburg', in: Matthias Puhle, ed., *Aufbruch in die Gotik. Der Magdeburger Dom und die Späte Stauferzeit*, exh. cat., Bd. I, Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2009, 192–201; Heinrike Haug, 'Materie als Prinzip und Ursache der Individuation. Ähnlichkeit und Bildnis in der Plastik des 13. Jahrhunderts', in: Martin Gaier, Jeanette Kohl, Alberto Saviello, eds, *Similitudo. Konzepte der Ähnlichkeit in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2012, 77–99.

²⁸ Dominic Olariu, *La genèse de la représentation ressemblante de l'homme. Reconsidérations du portrait à partir du XIIIe siècle*, Berne: Peter Lang, 2014; Idem, 'Thomas Aquinas' definition of

considered to be the external manifestation of the spiritual fulfilment of outstanding persons, and this fulfilment manifested itself in their bodies and their bodies' appearances. In light of this, bodies of certain individuals became worthy of being portrayed, because in them their virtuous souls were reflected. Thus, as Olariu has noted, the lifelike sculptures of 'virtuous' bodies are to be understood as markers of a special, 'godly' status of their owners. As such they are hardly a common feature of medieval image production. Quite the contrary – the right to a lifelike portrait was reserved for those who claimed to have had a special status: first and foremost the popes and other God-given dignitaries.

The countless generic faces decorating high medieval tombs, seals and figures appear in fact as parts of a broader system of representation assembled with reference to the quintessential form that defined an individual's identity, namely the seal. Originally seals were used in legal and financial transactions as a form of extending the person of its holder or as his substitute.²⁹ For this reason, their impact and legal efficacy depended mainly on the fact that seals were physical impressions of an authentic matrix owned by a given individual. Of importance here was not only the indexical contact of the matrix and wax, but also of the seal and its user. The soft, plastic wax was treated as a living matter which recorded the presence of an individual in his bodily form. Therefore the presence of the originator of an act was signalled by impressing in wax also parts of his body – fingers, teeth or hairs plucked from his beard.³⁰ However, starting from around 1200, the terms *imago impressa*, *character*, and *impressio* – that is, references to seals which emphasized their status of imprint – started to disappear from documents. The model, in which seal was treated as an extension to the person of its owner and embodiment of his presence by means of a physical impression, gradually diminished in importance. Simultaneously, increased attention was given to the seal's appearance. It started to be treated as an independent sign whose legal value no longer required reference to the original, that is the matrix and its holder. The power and efficacy of the seal was no longer based on the mechanical dependence of the image impressed in wax from a matrix kept in the originator's chancery, but rather on the mutual similitude of impressions, that is, the choice of a seal's type, its imagery – the insignia, symbols etc. (in this regard, royal seals had to be similar to the seals of other rulers in order to unequivocally convey the idea of the *regnum*, but at the same time they should be

the *imago Dei* and the development of lifelike portraiture', *Bulletin du center d'études médiévales d'Auxerre* | BUCEMA [on-line], 17, 2, consulted in: 24.07.2017 [http://cem.revues.org/13251]

²⁹ Thomas E.A. Dale, 'The Portrait as Imprinted Image and the Concept of the Individual in the Romanesque Period', in: Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, Jean-Michel Spieser, Jean Wirth, eds, *Le portrait. La représentation de l'individu*, Firenze: Sismel, 2007, 103; Brigitte Miriam Bedos-Rezak, 'In Search of a Semiotic Paradigm: The Matter of Sealing in Medieval Thought and Praxis (1050–1400)', in: Noël Adams, John Cherry, James Robinson, eds, *Good Impressions: Image and Authority in Medieval Seals*, London: British Museum, 2008, 1–2.

³⁰ Bedos-Rezak, 'In Search of a Semiotic Paradigm', 2; Michel Pastoureau, 'Les sceaux et la fonction sociale des images', in: idem, *Les signes et les songes: études sur la symbolique et la sensibilité médiévales*, Firenze: Sismel, 2015, 359–388.

different from other royal seals, so that they could efficiently identify a given person).³¹ What became important, then, was the replication of images represented in seals.³² Of importance is the fact, that the validity of late medieval seals did not rely on an explicitly formulated legal basis, but rather on the general practice of replication, which was sanctioned by lawyers. In the thirteenth-century gloss to Gregory IX's *Decretals*, an anonymous author asked rhetorically: what is a *sigillum authenticum*, and answered: authentic are ecclesiastical seals and 'the seal of a secular prince, to which the custom grants credence'. In the second half of the same century, Conrad von Mure (d. 1281), in his *Summa de arte prosandi*, observed that lawyers constructed various and mutually contradictory theories regarding the authenticity of seals that could be summed up in the following conclusion: an authentic seal is one that is well known and famous (*bene cognitum et famosum*).³³ Consequently, a credible (and at the same time, effective) seal had to be easily recognizable by the general public and because of that, the image in the centre of the seal had to clearly distinguish the seal's originator from its other users. These attempts of particularization, as Brigitte Miriam Bedos-Rezak has pointed out, 'reveal the strength of stereotypy as a cultural template which consistently re-directed expressions of individuality toward a crucible of likeness. This suggests that individuality was equated with marginality and otherness, signifying the state of being outside the boundaries of convention, whether social or representational'.³⁴

The method of personalizing images based on mutual similarity refers not only to the iconography of seals imagery; in the High Middle Ages it was related in fact to the entire sphere of representation, including manuscript illumination and monumental painting, sculpture, goldsmith's works etc. Sauerländer noted the symmetry, proportionality and timelessness of the statue of Princess Isabella of France (1242–1271), daughter of Louis IX, hewn out of stone around 1300 on the commission of Philip IV the Fair and placed in the church of the Dominican nunnery at Poissy (fig. 2). This statue not only perfectly corresponds with the

³¹ Brigitte Miriam Bedos-Rezak, 'Du sujet à l'objet: La formulation identitaire et ses enjeux culturels', in: Peter von Moos, ed., *Unverwechselbarkeit: Persönliche Identität und Identifikation in der vormodernen Gesellschaft*, Köln: Böhlau Verlag 2004, 35–55; Brigitte Miriam Bedos-Rezak, 'Replica: Images of Identity and the Identity of Images in Prescholastic France', in: Jeffrey Hamburger, Anne-Marie Bouché, eds, *The Mind's Eye. Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages*, Princeton: Princeton University, 2006, 46–64, see also Groebner, *Who Are You?*, 42–44.

³² 'Seal images, bound by and meaningful through conventions of similitude, formed a referential system in which one image referred primarily to another. Here again, reference to an origin, and to an originator, was obscured. Rather, cultural templates were highlighted as generative models, and each use of a conventional and replicated image instantiated these templates as both natural and normative', Bedos-Rezak 'Replica', 55.

³³ Bedos-Rezak, *In Search of a Semiotic Paradigm*, 4.

³⁴ Brigitte Miriam Bedos-Rezak, 'Ego, Ordo, Communitas. Seals and The Medieval Semiotics of Personality (1200–1350)', in: Markus Späth, ed., *Die Bildlichkeit korporativer Siegel im Mittelalter. Kunstgeschichte und Geschichte im Gespräch*, Köln-Wien-Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2009, 54.



Figure 2 *Statue of Princess Isabella of France*, ca. 1300 Dominican nunnery at Poissy, photo: Wikimedia Commons

contemporary ideal of a princess, as recorded in literary sources³⁵, but it also alludes to statues of queens sculpted several years earlier on the behest of Louis himself in Saint-Denis abbey. Isabella's sweet features – with high forehead, straight and short nose, little mouth and softly delineated chin – replicate the type of physiognomy known from the tomb of Constance of Arles and Robert the Pious in Saint-Denis. This type, just like Constance's entire figure, reflects in turn the ideal of female beauty earlier formulated in sacred art, as is testified, for example, by the *trumeau* figure of the Virgin and Child in the north transept portal of Notre-Dame cathedral in Paris and the little ivory statuette of the Virgin in the treasury of the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris.³⁶ The dependence of the figure in question on earlier works can, of course, be explained by stylistic relationship. It would, however, be an only partial explanation. As Bernd Carqué has demonstrated, the style favoured by Philip the Fair in his foundations exhibited retrospective traits, and sculptors commissioned by the king intentionally alluded to works of art that originated at the time of Louis IX.³⁷ Just as the style developed here referred to earlier foundations, so too concrete images were created according to the principle of representation that consisted in likening them to a particular type, realized earlier in some other images. The scale of the driving force behind this principle at the beginning of the fourteenth century can be judged by the intriguing account of Bernard Saisset, bishop of Pamiers, who wrote that while looking at Philip the Fair appearing before his court, one had an impression that he 'was neither man, nor beast, but the image' (*non erat homo, nec*

³⁵ Sauerländer, '*Phisionomia*', 116–117.

³⁶ See Bernd Carqué, '*Non erat homo, nec bestia, sed imago*. Vollplastische Bildwerke am Hof Philipps IV. von Frankreich und die Medialität der Gattung', in: Otto Gerhard Oexle, Michail A. Bojcov, eds, *Bilder der Macht in Mittelalter und Neuzeit. Byzanz – Okzident – Rußland*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007, 215–220.

³⁷ Carqué, '*Non erat homo*', 215–222.

bestia, sed imago).³⁸ The bishop, far from being appreciative of the French ruler, could have indicated in this way the king's inertia and passivity, yet it seems that he also described the aura created around the monarch by means of the distinctive ritual of his public appearances. Taciturn and languid, Philip looked as if he were not a living man, but as an image of a monarch, deprived of personality, one that his contemporaries associated with conventional images of rulers depicted on seals and coins.³⁹ Philip's identity was defined by his royal status, which was manifested not only through seals, but also in his gestures, appearance and demeanour. It is not only the image that reflects the position of an individual in the temporal hierarchy, but also an individual that defines himself with regard to the image.

In the thirteenth century an individually rendered face may represent emotions or race, sometimes it may even suggest certain traits of character (e.g. the ferocity and cruelty of the Tartars), but rarely does it convey an actual likeness of an individual. Generally, in this period, the act of visual representation should be considered a manifestation of membership in a given group. Such an association could not have been expressed by means of individualized or realistically rendered facial features, so signs, which accurately determined a relationship with a given clan, social group or corporation were used. An effective identification of an individual was therefore based on assigning to him signs and symbols used by the collective body whose member this individual claimed to be. Thus, the space for innovation and creativity was rather limited, since the reason of the identification was not to stand out from the group, but rather to determine one's place within it. As a result, the artists were expected not to record the actual likeness of the sitter in the visual medium, but rather to master the conventional repertoire of signs and be aware of the pictorial tradition according to which the identity of the sitter was to be defined. In this way, representations of the body, head and face were initially subject to rules of convention in which references to other pictures, and not the mimetic rendition of the actual body of the sitter, were of fundamental importance.

Likeness and identity: examples of portraits of Casimir the Great and Charles IV

What in the thirteenth century was equated with marginality and otherness in the fourteenth century started to be appreciated by several individuals as a valuable tool with which to portray themselves. It seems that in referring not so much to categories of medieval social order as reproducing their own bodies – or, to be more precise, making a claim to reproduce them – individualized likeness found its way into the arsenal of their pictorial representation signaling things that could not be represented solely by signs. Mimeticism started to play a role in their portraits because it focused attention on what was individual in them, showing their

³⁸ Heinrich Finke, 'Zur Charakteristik Philipps des Schönen', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 26, 1905, 209–210; Elizabeth Brown, 'Persona et gesta: The Image and Deeds of the Thirteenth-Century Capetians', *Viator*, 19, 1988, 228.

³⁹ Brown, 'Persona et gesta', 229–231 Carqué, 'Non erat homo', 214–215; Perkinson, *The Likeness of the King*, 89–90.

distinctiveness and sovereignty. The importance of many these 'early' portraits lies therefore not so much in realistically rendered faces; in fact, these images are often hardly realistic – rather they stand somewhere half-way between the conventionalized likeness and the realistic one, they present often not so much a real face of an individual as an individualized type of physiognomy that has been invented exclusively for one individual. Their importance is due to the fact that they challenged established norms and conventions, they focused the viewer's attention not only on the identity of the person understood in purely social terms, but displayed also something that can be called personal identity, presenting this person with an individualized physiognomy they distinguished him or her from others, and somehow rose above established limits of social norms.



Figure 3 Tomb monument of Casimir the Great, fragment, ca. 1370, Cracow Cathedral, photo: Print Room of Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences

The intentions with which these portraits were created, and terms with which they were to be understood by contemporary audiences are witnessed by the likenesses of the king of Poland, Casimir the Great (r. 1333–1370), and the Holy Roman Emperor and the king of Bohemia, Charles IV (r. 1346–1378). Casimir's tomb monument in Cracow Cathedral was commissioned, in all likelihood, by his successor, Louis of Anjou (d. 1382), king of Hungary and Poland (fig. 3).⁴⁰ The king

⁴⁰ Ewa Śnieżyńska-Stolotowa, 'Nagrobek Kazimierza Wielkiego' [The tomb monument of Casimir the Great], *Studia do Dziejów Wawelu*, 4, 1978, 1–115; Przemysław Mrozowski, *Nagrobki gotyckie w Polsce* [Gothic tombs in Poland], Warszawa: Zamek Królewski w Warszawie, 1994, 177–178, cat. no. I 25; Marek Walczak, Krzysztof J. Czyżewski, 'Die Krakauer Kathedrale und die Marienkirche in ihrer Funktion für Hof und Stadt', in: Marina Dmitrieva, Karen Lambrecht, eds, *Krakau, Prag und Wien. Funktionen von Metropolen im Frühmodernen Staat* (Forschungen zur Geschichte und Kultur des östlichen Mitteleuropa, vol. 10), Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000, 105–106.

was shown as an old man with a long beard arranged in curls and shoulder-length curly hair. The rendering of the head seems to be realistic at first glance, but Gerhard Schmidt has demonstrated its amazing similarity to the youngest sculptures in the so-called royal gallery at Reims Cathedral. (fig. 4)⁴¹ The Cracow statue recreates the majestic image of an ideal ruler, derived from the tradition of the kings of Israel, among others. What we see here is a carefully selected physiognomical type whose function it was to represent the ruler as a sage radiating with wisdom and displaying a stern countenance, one that was modelled on the representations of the great wise men of ancient times, Old-Testament prophets, apostles and other illustrious men of the past worthy of the highest esteem.



Figure 4 *Statue of a king*, fragment, Reims Cathedral, ca. 1360, after: Gerhard Schmidt, *Gotische Bildwerke und ihre Meister*, Wien-Köln-Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 1992, fig. 115.

Such a conclusion is corroborated by a comparison of the figure on the tomb with other official representations of Casimir the Great.⁴² The image on his majestic seal, for example, depicts the king in full length (on the obverse) and the emblem of the Kingdom (White Eagle) on the reverse, but other seals and coins show only his isolated crowned head (a type of representation that had appeared already in the coinage struck by Casimir's father, the Duke of Kuyavia, Ladislaus the Ell-high,

⁴¹ Gerhard Schmidt, 'Bemerkungen zur Königsgalerie der Kathedrale von Reims', in: *Gotische Bildwerke und ihre Meister*, Wien-Köln-Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 1992, 118–119, figs. 110, 112, 115 (first published in *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, 25, 1972, 96–83).

⁴² Zenon Piech, 'Symbole władcy i państwa w monarchii Władysława Łokietka i Kazimierza Wielkiego' [The symbols of the ruler and the state in the monarchy of Ladislaus the Ell-high and Casimir the Great], in Jacek Banaszkiewicz, ed., *Imagines Potestatis. Rytuály, symbole i konteksty fabularne władzy zwierchniej. Polska X–XV w. (z przykładem czeskim i ruskim)*, (Colloquia Mediaevalia Varsoviensia, I), Warszawa, 1994, 127.

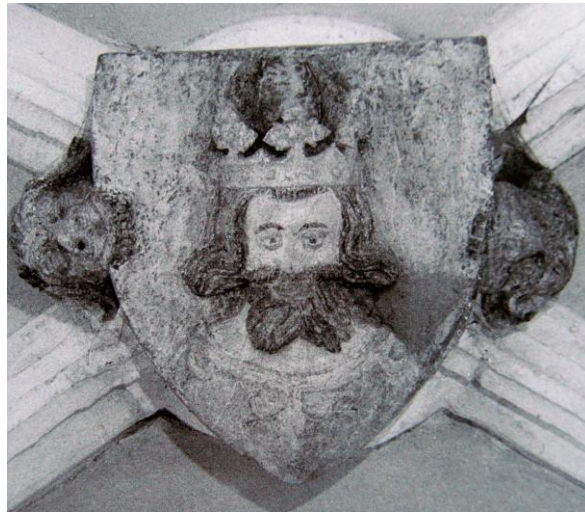


Figure 5 Coat of arms of the Dobrzyń Land, Vault keystone of the Collegiate Church in Wiślica, ca. 1360, after: Marek Walczak, *Rzeźba architektoniczna w Małopolsce za czasów Kazimierza Wielkiego*, Kraków: Universitas, fig. 243.

around 1314–1320).⁴³ These visual arrangements have numerous analogies in Europe's sigillography and numismatics.⁴⁴ What is of particular importance is a type of royal image that presents a crowned head with horns. It appears repeatedly on the so-called transitional-type *denars*, likely struck around 1333–1340, on the seal of the Upper Court of the Germanic law at the castle of Cracow, introduced around 1362, and about the mid-fourteenth century it was depicted in the coat of arms of the Dobrzyń Land, an area incorporated by Casimir into the Polish Kingdom in 1343.⁴⁵ The last example is unique. Being part of an extensive language of lands heraldry in the Kingdom of Poland in the fourteenth century the coat of arms of the Dobrzyń Land, appears to be a remarkable instance of coincidence of the ruler's device and his likeness. (fig. 5) And although the great fifteenth-century chronicler, Jan Długosz (1415–1480), described it as a depiction of an old man with horns ('faciem humanam senilem ad femur se protendentem, capite diademate adornato, cornibus quoque exasperato, in campo caeruleo habens pro insigni'⁴⁶), some historians rightly consider it a likeness of Casimir the Great. And indeed, what we see here is, in all probability, a kind of identification portrait, according to which

⁴³ Borys Paszkiewicz, 'Mennictwo Władysława Łokietka' [The Minting of Ladislas the Ell-high], *Wiadomości Numizmatyczne*, 30, 1986, no. 1–2, 58–60, 88 (denar of type 4/I); 62–65, 88 (denar of type 6?); Piech, 'Symbole władcy', 128, note 86.

⁴⁴ For instance, the secret seal of the city of Casimir [Kazimierz] near Cracow (founded by Casimir in 1335), featuring the crowned head of the young king, can be compared with impressions of the small seal of Elizabeth (Přemyslid) of Bohemia (before 1312), see Piech, 'Symbole władcy', fig. 10.

⁴⁵ For a broad treatment of this topic, see Marek Walczak, *Rzeźba architektoniczna w Małopolsce za czasów Kazimierza Wielkiego* [Architectural sculpture in Lesser Poland in the Times of Cazimir the Great], Kraków: Universitas, 322–329.

⁴⁶ *Ioannis Długosii seu Longini Canonici Cracoviensis Historiae Polonicae libri XII*, vol. IV: Libri XI, XII, Kraków, 1877, 39.

contemporary figures were to be represented in the guise of Biblical or historical characters.⁴⁷ The horns were adopted from the images of Moses and were aimed to equal Casimir with the Old-Testament patriarch.⁴⁸ In the Vulgate, they signify Moses' abiding in the presence of God and his conversation with the Creator, of which the most important fruit were the tablets of the law that Yahweh revealed to his chosen people through the hands of the patriarch. The image of the king's horned head must be therefore associated with the notion of king's rule as the source of law, termed by Ernst Kantorowicz as the *law-centered kingship*.⁴⁹ Such a biblical understanding of the above images supports also the literary context provided in the allegorized language of the documents and charters issued by the royal chancellery. In the preambles to the statutes of Greater and Lesser Poland as well as in the *arenga* of the foundation charter of the church at Niepołomice near Cracow, Casimir is described as a righteous ruler who acts 'Salomonis exemplo' – following the example of Salomon.

Both portraits of Casimir blending his identity with Biblical characters and written sources linking him with the kings of Israel are fixed deeply in the fundamental means of defining personal identity in the Middle Ages. This means constantly referred to the models provided by figures from the past. It developed on a basic conception of history which derived its force from its inseparable bond with faith, and which for almost a thousand years remained the only accepted view of history. As every human being, Casimir was also subjected to the uncharted course of history in which more important than causal relationship characteristic of a chronological interpretation of events was the one which Erich Auerbach aptly called figural interpretation (Germ. *figuraldeutung*). Figural interpretation in his understanding: 'establishes a connection between two events or persons, the first of

⁴⁷ On the identification portrait see: Friedrich B. Polleross, *Das sakrale Identifikationsporträt. Ein höfischer Bildtypus vom 13. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart: Wernersche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1988; Friedrich B. Polleross, 'Between Typology and Psychology: The Role of Identification Portrait in Updating Old Testament Representations', *Artibus et Historiae*, 24, 1991, 75–117; Friedrich B. Polleross, 'Die Anfänge des Identifikationsporträts im höfischen und städtischen Bereich', *Frühneuzeit-Info*, 4, no. 1, 1993, 17–36, see also Gerhard Schmidt, 'Beiträge zum gotischen „Kryptoporträt“ in Frankreich', in: idem, *Malerei der Gotik. Fixpunkte und Ausblicke*, Bd. 2: *Malerei der Gotik in Süd und Westeuropa*, Studien zum Herrscherporträt, Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 329–340.

⁴⁸ Piech, 'Symbole władcy', 131; Borys Paszkiewicz, 'Rogi króla Kazimierza' [King Casimir's horns], in: Banaszkiewicz, *Imagines Potestatis*, 164; Przemysław Mrozowski, 'Sztuka jako narzędzie władzy: królewski patronat artystyczny Kazimierza Wielkiego' [Art as the ruling tool: A royal artistic patronage of Kazimir the Great], in: Dariusz Konstantynow, Robert Pasieczny, Piotr Paszkiewicz, eds, *Sztuka i władza*, Warszawa: Instytut Sztuki PAN, 2001, 7; Wojciech Drelicharz, Zenon Piech, *Dawne i nowe herby Małopolski* [The old and new coats of arms of Lesser Poland], Kraków: Societas Vistulana, 2004, 213; Walczak, *Rzeźba architektoniczna*, 325–328.

⁴⁹ Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's two Bodies. A Study in Medieval Political Theology*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957, 87–192; as regards Poland see, e.g., Grzegorz Ryś, 'Chrześcijańska ideologia władzy w Polsce' [The Christian ruling ideology in Poland], *Nasza Przyszłość*, 76, 1991, 46.

which signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second encompasses and fulfills the first. The two poles of the figure are separate in time, but both being real events or figures, are within time, within the stream of historical life."⁵⁰ The only thing that allows such an interpretation, that connects various events and persons in the flowing stream of historical life is Divine providence, the only force which is able to devise such a plan and supply the key to its understanding. For this reason 'here and now is no longer a mere link in an earthly chain of events, it is simultaneously something which has always been, and which will be fulfilled in the future; and strictly, in the eyes of God. It is something eternal, something omni-temporal, something already consummated in the realm of fragmentary earthly event.'⁵¹ Such an understanding of history derives from biblical exegesis, but it allows not only to catch the sense locked within the Bible, not only to find the *sensus spiritualis* which connects the events from the Old and New Testament, but also to understand the true sense of events occurring in the age under Grace (*sub gratia*) that stretches between Christ's Incarnation and Passion and his second coming. Thus, linear sequence of epochs harmonizes with figural structure of universal history in which future and past are simultaneously something present and are in present constantly reminded. Figural interpretation of history grew out of the liturgy, and for this reason was omnipresent in virtually every aspect of human activity in the Middle Ages.⁵² For the Polish king, however, it became a fundamental tool with which he presented himself as an embodiment of the royal virtue of righteousness and God-given ability to enact law, and it seems that it was this same figural interpretation that determined the peculiar character of his portraits.

An only slightly different pictorial strategy can be observed in the portraits of Charles IV, Casimir's great contemporary. The characteristic face of a mature man with short beard, round nose and fluffy cheeks that appears in many official portraits of the Holy Roman Emperor and King of Bohemia executed frequently since the time of his coronation in Rome in 1355 until his death in 1378, suggests he preferred such a form of representation to conventionalized portraiture. Contrary to images of Casimir the Great, it is difficult to find one particular model or pictorial archetype on which his likeness could be modelled. It seems likely indeed that, although monumentalized and not necessarily executed directly from life, his portraits resemble at least the basic elements of his outward appearance. Such an attitude corresponds in a way with opinions and panegyrics formulated in chronicles and poems created by authors dependent on imperial ideology forged in the court in Prague. Charles is usually presented there as a wise and learned ruler

⁵⁰ Erich Auerbach, 'Figura', in idem, *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature*, Trans. Ralph Manheim, Minneapolis: Minneapolis University Press, 1984, 11–76, here 53; Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis. The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, Transl. William R. Task, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953, 73.

⁵¹ Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 73–74.

⁵² See for example Margot Fassler, *The Liturgical Framework of Time and the Representation of History*, in: Robert Maxwell, ed., *Representing History 900-1300. Art, Music, History*, University Park" Penn State University Press, 2010, 145–246.

(*rex sapiens, rex litteratus*),⁵³ able to dispute with scholars, and to speak fluently in many languages⁵⁴, as well as an utmost judge who loves justice and peace (*dominus iustus, iusticie et pacis amator*).⁵⁵ All these qualities not only suggest exceptional personality but most of all go beyond the terms with which secular rulers have been traditionally described. Indeed, the wisdom and erudition that Charles acquired resulted from the fact that he was the one who has been chosen by God, that he, as Heinrich von Mügeln has phrased it, was a *gotes frünt*, who could have broken the law but would not do so because God entrusted him with true judgment, and handed over all power to reward virtues and to punish sins.⁵⁶

Indeed, Charles IV wanted to be viewed first and foremost as a humble servant of God who by exercising his power fulfills duties bestowed to him by God. Not coincidentally Beneš Krabice of Weitmile wrote that before Charles has been given the entire globe at his disposal he had to be tested in various temptations and dangers. As gold that survived the fire, he could have recognized the Savior and on the example of his own torments and tribulations could have learned how to suffer with others and to find mercy for them while being raised above the entire globe.⁵⁷ In fact, referring to the ancient imperial tradition Charles constantly exhibited a quasi-sacerdotal nature of his imperial power as well as highlighted its role as a kind of spiritual guidance that made him responsible for the salvation of his people. For example, in the prayer opening his Golden Bull issued in 1356 he is introduced as a beloved son of gracious God, under whose faithful leadership the people may

⁵³ See for example Eva Schlotheuber, 'Der Weise König. Herrschaftskonzeption und Vermittlungsstrategien Kaiser Karls IV. (†1378)', *Hémecht. Zeitschrift für Luxemburger Geschichte*, 63, 2011, 265–279; eadem, 'Die Rolle des Rechts in der Herrschaftsauffassung Kaiser Karls IV.', in: Ulrike Hohensee, Mathias Lawo, Michael Lindner, eds, *Die Goldene Bulle: Politik – Wahrnehmung – Rezeption*, Vol. 1, Berlin: Akademie Verlag 2009, 141–168.

⁵⁴ *Řeč arcibiskupa Pražského Jana Očka z Vlašimi* (Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum, III), Praha, 1882, 427.

⁵⁵ *Kronika Beneše z Weitmile* (Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum, IV), ed. Josef Emler, Praha 1884, 507, 543, see Iva Rosario, *Art and Propaganda. Charles IV of Bohemia, 1346–1378*, Woodbridge, 2000, 102–107; *Kronika Beneše z Weitmile* (Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum, IV), ed. Josef Emler, Praha 1884, 457–548, esp. 525A, 51–53 and 525B, 10–13.

⁵⁶ „Darnach den waren gotes frünt, / künig Karlen. das sin leben künt / er mochte brechen und enbricht / des gab im got sin war gericht / das er in volle geben mag / der tugende lon und bruches slag“, Heinrich von Mügeln, *Die kleineren Dichtungen*, hrsg. Karl Stackmann, Berlin 2003, v. 63–68, see Hubert Herkommer, 'Kritik und Panegyrik. Zum literarischen Bild Karls IV. (1346–1378)', *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter*, 44, 1980, 105; Schlotheuber, 'Der Weise König', 2; Martin Bauch, *Divina favente clemencia. Auserwählung, Frömmigkeit und Heilsvermittlung in der Herrschaftspraxis Kaiser Karls IV*, Köln-Weimar-Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2015, 75–76.

⁵⁷ „Voluit enim Deus famulum suum, quem toti orbi preesse disponebat, prius probare diversis temptationibus et periculis, ut tunquam aurum fornace examinatum mundatorem ac liberatorem suum ipse agnosceret et ex suis tribulationibus ac pressuris ipse disceret, qualiter in solio universi orbis positus aliis opportheret compati et misereri“, *Kronika Beneše z Weitmile* (Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum, IV), ed. Josef Emler, Praha 1884, 497.

be brought through the green fields of Paradise,⁵⁸ and in the second recension of the *Chronica* written in 1350 by Francis of Prague he is introduced as an “instrument of almighty providence” (*instrumentum sue clementissime providencie*), because he is the one who prepares people to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.⁵⁹ Well known is also Charles’s personal inclination towards active participation in liturgical service, that manifested itself during an octave of Christmas when he proceeded to read the seventh lesson of matins *Exiit edictum a Caesare Augusto* [Luke 2.1] and during the coronation mass when he proceeded to read the Gospel.⁶⁰ What is more, he received the minor orders of the church ministry and for this reason John of Jenštejn, the archbishop of Prague, in his funeral oration to Charles IV could call him an acolyte.⁶¹

Piety, wisdom and the state of being elected to exercise power over the world recorded repeatedly by Charles’ apologists and exhibited by the Emperor himself through his writings, rituals and behavior were to be felt not so much as his personal qualities as a manifestation of a superior force – a component of the divine plan of salvation. For this reason virtues and pious deeds of the Emperor and King of Bohemia praised in poems and recorded in chronicles should not be understood solely as a fund of information about what Charles IV really was like as a person. Equally important is an archetype of sacerdotal kingship that emerges from all of them which is rooted deeply in the biblical tradition, and which continually portrays him as a persistent follower of Christ and a new incarnation of Old-Testament figures: a second David, Solomon, Judas Maccabeus, or Jonathan.⁶² The introduction of the individualized physiognomy of Charles IV to the arsenal of his pictorial propaganda should also be viewed in this context. A major part of the

⁵⁸ Bernd-Ulrich Hergemöller, *Cogor adversum te. Drei Studien zum literarisch-theologischen Profil Karls IV. und seine Kanzlei* (Studien zu dem Luxemburgern und ihrer Zeit, Bd. 7.), Warendorf: Fahlbusch, 1999, 127:

‘Omnipotens eterne deus/ spes unica mundi
Qui celi fabricator ades/ qui conditor orbis
Tu populi memor esto tui/ sic mitis ab alto
Prospice/ ne gressum faciat/ ubi regnat erinis
Imperat allecto/ leges dictante megera
Sed potius virtute tui/ quem diligis huius
Cesaris insignis karoli/ deus alme ministra’

⁵⁹ See *Chronicon Francisci Pragensis* (Fontes rerum Bohemicarum 4, 1884), 453 and Hergemöller, *Cogor adversum te*, 137.

⁶⁰ Hermann Heimpel, ‘Königlicher Weihnachtsdienst im späteren Mittelalter’, *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalter*, 39, 1983, 131–132; Hergemöller, *Cogor adversum te*, 204; Franz-Reiner Erkens, ‘Vicarius Christi – sacratissimus legislator – sacra majestas. Religiöse Herrschaftslegitimierung im Mittelalter’, *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte*, 89, 2003, 41–42, recently Bauch, *Divina favente clemencia*, 87–94.

⁶¹ *Řeč arcibiskupa Pražského Jana Očka z Vlašimi* (Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum, III), Praha 1882, 429: ‘Ipse enim fuit ordinatus accolitus et eciam rex et imperator inunctus’, see Heimpel, ‘Königlicher Weihnachtsdienst’, 134–135, Erkens, ‘Vicarius Christi’, 42.

⁶² Herkommer, ‘Kritik und Panegyrik’, 93–95; Robert Suckale, ‘Die Porträts Kaiser Karls IV. als Bedeutungsträger’, in Büchsel, Schmidt, *Das Porträt*, 200–202.



Figure 6 Master Theodoric, *Adoration of the Magi*, window recess of the Holy Cross Chapel, Karlštejn castle, ca. 1365-1367, after: Jiří Fajt, ed., *Magister Theodoricus. Dvorní malíř císaře Karla IV*, Praha 1998, fig. 117.

portraits of Charles IV depict him in the guise of biblical or historical figures and the association between Charles and the figure in whose guise he is represented relies on a figural understanding of the events. In these portraits Charles is usually represented with his characteristic type of physiognomy and other identifying features, such as the insignia of power and coats of arms, and, at the same time, is linked with a figure from the past through costume, auxiliary objects, and setting in which the figure is located. These identification portraits became a frequent component of Charles' visual propaganda since the time of his imperial coronation in 1355 thus illustrating his role in the history of salvation. A great deal of them present Charles as one of the Three Magi paying tribute to the Christ child. They can be seen on the left wing of a diptych executed around 1355 (New York, Morgan Library, the emperor is distinguished here by a red cope with imperial eagles), in the initial "O" in the *temporale* of *Liber Viaticus* of John of Sřreda (Prague, National Museum, MS XIII A 12, f. 97v, Charles is identified by the closed imperial crown), in a wall-painting in one of the window recess of the Holy Cross Chapel at Karlštejn castle (executed by Master Theodoric around 1365-1367, fig. 6), and in the wall-painting in the church in Libiř in Bohemia (executed already after Charles's death, with all likelihood by someone linked to his son – Wenceslaus IV). In a general sense, the identification of Charles with one of the Three Magi who came from the East to worship the infant Christ may be interpreted as a signal of his attachment to the imperial office. From 1164 onwards, that is from the time when Frederick Barbarossa moved their relics from Milan to Cologne, the cult of the Three Magi in the Holy Roman Empire systematically grew in importance, becoming a pivotal element of the official piety of the successive kings of the Romans and the Emperors, comparable in importance to the Crown of Thorns brought to Sainte-Chappelle by Louis IX in the Kingdom of France.⁶³ However, not only does the veneration of relics

⁶³ See Hans Hofmann, *Die Heiligen Drei Könige: zur Heiligenverehrung im kirchlichen, gesellschaftlichen und politischen Leben des Mittelalters*, Bonn: L. Röhrscheid, 1975 302–303; Olga

and the attachment to imperial tradition explain Charles' visual identification with the Three Magi but first and foremost it was the salvific understanding of his own kingship. The foundation charter for the Emmaus monastery in Prague, issued 1347 invokes the offerings of the Three Magi as a parallel, citing the prophetic words of king David from the Psalm 71 (72), 10-11: "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts; Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him."⁶⁴ With these words the antiphon of the offertory from the liturgy of Epiphany began, which could have been also sung at the royal coronation in Aachen, and probably during ceremonies of imperial entries into cities.⁶⁵ In the Holy Cross Chapel at Karlštejn the Nativity and the Adoration of the Magi relate to the veneration of the apocalyptic lamb by the Twenty-four Elders and the Apocalyptic God who appears in the opposite window recess, clearly informing about the imperial role in the Divine plan of salvation.⁶⁶ The diptych in the Morgan Library, which might have been executed during Charles's stay in Lucca in 1355, on the right wing represents Death of the Virgin in which the figure of St. Peter is singled out. The prince of apostles is shown in pontifical robes including the papal tiara suggesting that the actual pope is disguised in his figure, namely Innocent IV who in 1355 crowned Charles IV the Holy Roman Emperor. A sophisticated association of biblical events with the actual one here perpetuates the imperial coronation in Rome and visualizes the idea of *coniunctionis duorum orbis capitorum*, that is, a harmonious coexistence of Imperial and Sacerdotal power, the idea fervently pursued by Charles IV. In every case the identification of the Emperor with one of the Three Magi reached unprecedented intensity thus unveiling the spiritual meaning of history in which his role is shown within the context of the Divine plan of salvation.⁶⁷

The portrait of Charles IV in the guise of king David found in the window in the choir of the church of St. Marta in Nuremberg (executed around 1370) should be

Pujmanová, 'Portraits of Kings depicted as Magi in Bohemian Painting', in: Dillian Gordon, Lisa Monnas, Caroline Elam, eds, *The Regal Image of Richard II. and the Wilton Diptych*, London 1997, 250–251.

⁶⁴ Suckale, 'Die Porträts', 202, note 34; see also Andreas Puth, 'Christus dominus de hoc seculo. Charles IV, advent and epiphany on the south Transept Façade of St Marys's in Mühlhausen', in Jiří Fajt, Andrea Langer, eds, *Kunst als Herrschaftsinstrument. Böhmen und das Heilige Römische Reich unter den Luxemburgern im Europäischen Kontext*, Berlin-München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2009, 528.

⁶⁵ Puth, 'Christus dominus de hoc seculo', 158.

⁶⁶ Jiří Fajt, Jan Royt, *Umělecká výzdoba velké věže hradu Karlštejna. Ecclesia triumphans*, in: Jiří Fajt, ed., *Magister Theodoricus. Dvorní malíř císaře Karla IV*, Praha 1998, 223–224; Rosario, *Art and Propaganda*, 32–35.

⁶⁷ Jaroslav Pešina, 'Imperium et Sacerdotium. Zur Inhaltsdeutung der sgn. Morgan-Tafelchen', *Umění*, 26, no. 6, 1978, 521–528; Pujmanová 'Portraits of Kings', 254; Rosario, *Art and Propaganda*, 111; Max Seidel, Romano Silva, *The Power of Images, the Images of Power. Lucca as an Imperial City: Political Iconography*, Munich-Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2007, 55–56, see also *Diptychon mit der Anbetung der Könige und dem Marientod*, in Jiří Fajt, ed., *Karl IV. Kaiser von Gottes Gnaden. Kunst und Repräsentation des Hauses Luxemburg 1310-1437*, München-Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2007, 98, cat. no. 15.a–b (Jiří Fajt).



Figure 7 *Adoration of the Magi and King David*, window in the choir of the church of St. Martha, Nuremberg, ca. 1370, after: Jiří Fajt, Markus Hörsch, eds, *Kaiser Karl IV 1316-2016. Erste Bayerisch-Tschechische Landessaussstellung. Ausstellungskatalog*, Prag: Národní galerie v Praze, 2016, fig. 10.13b

viewed in a similar manner.⁶⁸ (fig. 7) The representation of king David is juxtaposed here with the adoration of the Magi, thus referring to the above mentioned verses of the Psalm 71, 10-11. That the association of Charles IV and king David must have been understood as an insight into the spiritual sense of history in which the inscrutable will of God was unveiled testifies an extraordinary account of sister Christina Ebner, a Dominican nun and mystic in the convent in Engheltal outside the city of Nuremberg. After Charles IV came to visit her in 1350 seeking her guidance and prayers, the mystic, who advocated earlier for Louis the Bavarian, Charles' serious opponent, had a revelation in which God revealed to her that he had chosen Charles as his servant in this age, exactly as He did with David in the previous age.⁶⁹ The identity of the Emperor might also be presumed 'disguised' in

⁶⁸ Suckale, 'Die Porträts', 201; *Glasmalereien aus der Nürnberger Pilgerspitalkirche St. Martha*, in: Jiří Fajt, Markus Hörsch, eds, *Kaiser Karl IV 1316-2016. Erste Bayerisch-Tschechische Landessaussstellung. Ausstellungskatalog*, Prag: Národní galerie v Praze, 2016, 453-454, cat. no. 10.13.a-b (Jenny Wischnewsky)

⁶⁹ 'Unser Herr sprach zu ihr: „Wirst du bezüglich der Welt angesprochen, dann sage: ich habe meinen Knecht David im alten Zeitalter erwählt, genauso habe ich mir im neuen Zeitalter König Karl erwählt“', Matthias Binder, 'Christina Ebner in ihren Schriften', in Matthias Binder, Peter Baumann, Robert Giersch, eds, *Christina Ebner 1277-1356. Beiträge zum 650. Todesjahr der Engelthaler Dominikanerin und Mystikerin*, Neuhaus an der Pegnitz: Altnürnberger Landschaft, 2007 (Altnürnberger Landschaft e.V. Mitteilungen. Sonderheft, 51), 59; Bauch, *Divina favente clemencia*, 66-67.

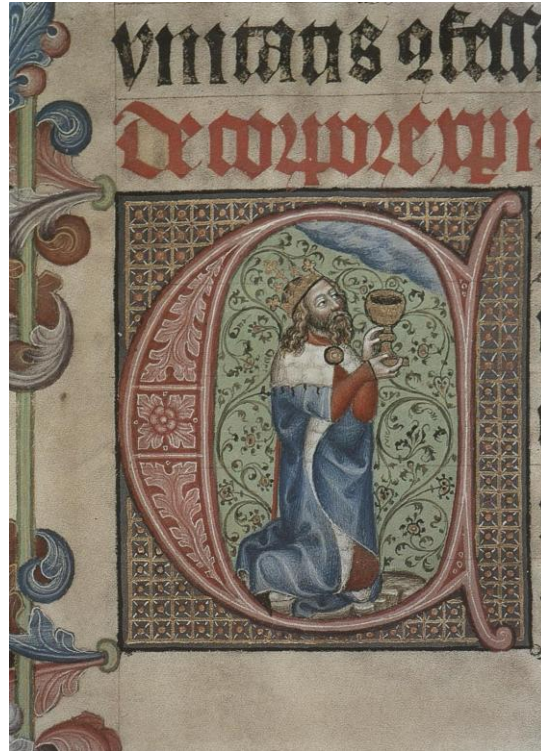


Figure 8 *Melchizedek*, Missal of Jan of Středa, Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly u sv. Víta, cim. 6, fol. 83 r., after: Iva Rosario, *Art and Propaganda. Charles IV of Bohemia, 1346-1378*, Woodbridge, 2000, fig. 34

the representations of Melchizedek, the Old Testament king and priest which adorn the initial 'S' in the Vyšehrad antiphonary (from the Augustinian monastery in Roudnice nad Labem, presently in the Stift-Vorau, vol. 3, fol. 8r)⁷⁰ and 'C' in the Missal of Jan of Středa (Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly u sv. Víta, cim. 6, fol. 83 r, fig. 8).⁷¹ In both miniatures the 'Priest of God most high' who brought out bread and wine and blessed Abraham after defeating king Chedorlaomer is shown crowned and rising the chalice of wine thus visualizing a typological connection between Melchizedek and Jesus Christ understood as a High Priest (Psalm 110 (109), 4 and Hebr. 7, 11-16).⁷² For Charles IV who participated actively in liturgical offices and constantly manifested a quasi-sacerdotal dimension of his power, the figure of Melchizedek, *res et sacerdos* in one person, provided but the next example of kingship that embodied the ideal of the ruler who implemented the Divine plan of salvation.

Indeed, virtually every portrait commissioned either by Charles IV or by trusted people from his courtly milieu seem to carry the same, fundamental message. The emperor was presented as the embodiment of the ideal of Christ-

⁷⁰ Helga Wammetsberger, 'Individuum und Typ in den Porträts Kaiser Karls IV', *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe*, 16, no. 1, 1967, 80; Suckale, 'Die Porträts', 201.

⁷¹ Wammetsberger, 'Individuum und Typ', 89; Marco Bogade, *Kaiser Karl IV. Ikonographie und Ikonologie*, Stuttgart: ibidem Verlag, 2004, 189–192, 269

⁷² *Missale des Johann von Neumarkt*, in Fajt, *Karl IV*, 185, cat. no. 58 (Hana J. Hlavačková).

centered kingship, as a pious ruler who followed Christ in his transforming work of salvation. This christomimetic fundament of imperial kingship was shown through evoking a wide range of associations rooted in the figural interpretation of events and thus enabled to situate the temporal power of the emperor within the universal history of salvation. This applies not only to the identification portraits but also to those showing Charles IV on his own as well as those presenting him in pious act of veneration – regardless whether it be the fragment of the True Cross or Christ suffering on the cross, the incarnate *Logos* sitting on the laps of his Mother or Christ enthroned as supreme judge.

It should be stressed that the portraits of the king of Poland and the Holy Roman Emperor, although they introduced some unprecedented pictorial solutions and insisted more strongly on their individuality, did not break off radically with the established system of representation. They mark, however, an important shift within this system that allowed not only signs but also mimetic and/or individualized likeness to present their personal identity. Images of Casimir the Great shown him as a person clearly distinguished from others, they stressed his role of the sovereign ruler who has been credited by God with the special right to enact law, and in order to achieve this they depended not only on signs but utilize also a specific type of individualized physiognomy. Whether these likenesses resembled real facial features of Casimir or not, is hard to tell. Without any doubt, however, they referred to the representations of the great wise men of the ancient times thus highlighting specific virtues and qualities identified exclusively with the Polish king. Images of Charles IV at first glance appear to be more realistic. Instead of adopting any established type of physiognomy they utilize a new one, created presumably on the basis of Charles' real facial features. This 'natural' face of Charles IV was indicated on him as the one who through his personal virtues had been anointed to the office of the King of Romans, and subsequently the Holy Roman Emperor – who had been awarded with these dignities not only by the election but first and foremost by the inscrutable grace of God. More often than not, however, this countenance was amalgamated with the figures from the past or appeared in the context of the official imperial iconography, showing Charles in full regalia and/or in the act of pious veneration thus stressing not so much his personal character as an archetype of sacerdotal kingship he embodied. In both cases we can observe a pictorial strategy involving physiognomic individualization even if the rendering of individual features is not an imperative aim. What we see is in fact a tension that results from reproducing actual countenance of an individual and idealizing or ethical demands, a tension that was to become one of the essential qualities of early modern portraiture, and especially the portraits of rulers.⁷³

⁷³ See Matthias Müller, 'Die Individualität des Fürsten als Illusion der Malerei. Zum Verhältnis von Individualität, Typus und Schema in Regentenporträts der beginnenden Frühen Neuzeit', in Oliver Auge, Ralf-Gunnar Wehrlich, Gabriel Zeilinger, eds, *Fürsten an der Zeitenwende zwischen Gruppenbild und Individualität. Formen fürstlicher Selbstdarstellung und ihre Rezeption (1450-1550)*. Wissenschaftliche Tagung Landeskulturzentrum Schloß Salza, 27.-29. März 2008, Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2009, 103–127.

Likeness and presence: the case of the portrait of Rudolph IV

Practices and rituals reaching back to ancient times testify to the fact that portraits were considered not as lifeless images that merely immortalized the appearance of the person depicted in them, but as active objects that partook in the identity of the sitter. Ceremonies involving placing portraits of rulers, in the absence thereof, on the throne or under a canopy, are well known. An intriguing story about the bust of Pope Gregory XV kept in his palace relates even that a 'berettino di raso rosso' was put on the head of the sculpture and that it was covered with 'coperta di taffetà rosso', as if it were the actual bishop of Rome and not his image. As a Central European example one can mention the portrait of Cardinal Ferdinand Julius von Troyer (by Martin van Meytens II, 1746)⁷⁴ that used to be hung under a canopy in the feudal court hall in the residence of the bishops of Olomouc at Kroměříž Castle (Moravia), where it served as a 'substitute' for the absent hierarch during court proceedings.⁷⁵ Equally well known and popular are historical accounts of miracles worked by likenesses. One such miracle was recorded in 1388–1389 in a canonization report of Cardinal Peter of Luxembourg (1369–1387), bishop of Metz. Arnaldus de Plausolis, a Provençal magnate worried about the life of his pregnant wife, Guilielma, is said to have brought home an image of the saintly hierarch and made an oath that his newborn son would be named after the cardinal. The labour not only went smoothly and *cum minori dolore*, but the infant boy acquired the facial features of Peter, just as those in the portrait brought home by his father.⁷⁶ The *Chronicle* of the Cistercian abbey at Zbraslav in Bohemia (*Chronicon Aulae Regiae*, c. 1305–1339) mentions a soldier who lost his sight after having insulted and slapped the face of the effigy in the tomb monument to Wenceslaus II, King of Bohemia.⁷⁷ Stories and practices of this kind, recorded in written sources, testify to the fact that in the pre-modern era there was no clear distinction between the image itself and the things depicted. The present-day observer may experience this as a manifestation of a magic culture and superstition characteristic of primitive societies. It looks, however, that in order to gain deeper insight into this phenomenon, one has to refer to the specific categories that were applied to

⁷⁴ Pavel Suchánek, 'Peintre de Sa Majesté Britannique. Franz Adolph of Freenthal and his portrait of Maximilian Hamilton, Prince-Bishop of Olomouc', *RIHA Journal*, 52, 2012, no. 3, fig. 7; Pavel Suchánek, *Triumf obnovujícího se dne. Umění a duchovní aristokracie na Moravě v 18. století*, Brno, 2013, 19–35, fig. III.

⁷⁵ Suchánek, *Triumf*, 20, 22.

⁷⁶ *Acta Sanctorum De B. Petro de Luxemburgo*, art. 201, 579: '[...] dicta Guilielma peperit unum filium, & cum minori dolore; quam umquam fecisset: cui secundum votum, nomen Petrus impositum est: postea vero dum ipsa mater intueretur dictum filium; recordata de imagine dicti Domini Cardinalis depicta, statim dixit: Certe iste filius assimilatur imagini Domini Cardinalis, quoniam inter os & labia habebat quamdam concavaturam'.

⁷⁷ *Petra Žitavského Kronika Zbraslavská* (Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum, vol. 4, ed. Josef Emler), kap. 83, 105; see Karel Stejskal, 'Obvinění mistra Jeronýma Pražského z ikonoklasmu a modlářství na kostnickém kocilu', in: Jaroslav Pánek, Miloslav Polívka, Noemi Rejchrtová, eds, *Husstitism – Reformation – Renaissance. Volume to the 60th Birthday František Šmahel*, Praha: Historický Ústav, 1994, 371.

likenesses in the Middle Ages (particularly in their later period), categories that can be traced not only in the theoretical treatises '*de imaginibus*', but also in rituals, paraliturgical practices and so on. And, most importantly, although these categories originally developed in relation to the representations of Christ, the Virgin Mary and saints, they may just as well be relevant to figural representations of personages who did not have the saintly status, namely rulers, ecclesiastical hierarchs or wealthy patrons. What are meant here are not only portraits *sensu stricto*, but also commemorative figures erected in church interiors, tomb monuments and the like. In this context, of particular importance is the analogy between the ways that portraits of rulers and the sacrament of the Eucharist were interpreted, recently noted by Philipp Zitzlsperger.⁷⁸ According to Church teachings, which since the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 had the status of a dogma, the consecration of the host on the altar during Mass was understood as a conversion (transubstantiation) of the bread and wine into the real body and blood of Christ. Just as in the transubstantiated Host we are witnessing the confusion of the represented (Christ's body and blood) and the representing (bread and wine), so in the case of images and portraits one can sometimes speak of a peculiar blurring of what represents and what is represented (even if the official theology of the image emphasized the utilitarian and conventional character of likenesses, and, in keeping with the arguments put forward by Saints Augustine and Gregory the Great as well as early medieval theologians, the difference between the image as a material object and the persons or events depicted in it was strongly asserted). Just as in the Eucharist, so also in images, there existed only a superficial (accidental) difference between the sitter and his portrait, and at the same time, the ontological difference was blurred, even if only to a certain degree. An image or portrait depicting a saint or a ruler not only reminded about his (absent) person, but in a sense also imparted his presence. It could influence the beholders as if it were a living person, and it was apprehended by them as such.⁷⁹

If we keep in mind this fundamental principle, we shall appreciate the special importance of the oldest independent likenesses, among which of exceptional significance are the two panels dating from the mid-fourteenth century, representing in all likelihood the King of France, John the Good (Paris, Louvre) and the Archduke of Austria Rudolph IV (Vienna, Cathedral Museum, fig. 9). The former portrait has been traditionally presented as the fount of the French school of painting, a view that informed the installation of the French painting collection at the Louvre which situates the panel at the starting point of early modern painting in

⁷⁸ Philipp Zitzlsperger, 'Distanz und Präsenz. Das Porträt in der Frühneuzeit zwischen Repräsentation und Realpräsenz', in: Mark Hengerer, ed., *Abwesenheit Beobachten: zu Kommunikation auf Distanz in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Berlin-Münster: Lit Verlag, 2013, 47–48.

⁷⁹ See Thomas Lentz, 'Auf der Suche nach dem Ort des Gedächtnisses. Thesen zur Umwertung der symbolischen Formen in Abendmahlslehre, Bildtheorie und Bildandacht des 14.-16. Jahrhundert' in: Klaus Krüger, Alessandro Nova, eds, *Imagination und Wirklichkeit. Zum Verhältnis von mentalen und realen Bildern in der Kunst der frühen Neuzeit*, Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2000, 24.



Figure 9 *Portrait of Rudolph IV, Archduke of Austria*, Dom- und Diözesanmuseum, Vienna

Northern Europe (distinctly apart from the Louvre's medieval collection located in the Decorative Arts and Sculpture galleries)⁸⁰. The latter panel waited a little longer to be included in the art-historical debate, but this painting had also become part of the developmental chain whose links reached from medieval forms of representation to the modern art of portraiture. In 1933 Johannes Wilde, in a recapitulation of a short notice written on the occasion on the panel's conservation treatment and its transfer from the archive of the Vienna cathedral chapter to the newly established cathedral museum, noted that '[it] is the oldest independent portrait in German art'.⁸¹ Although Wilde's text dealt exclusively with formal and technical issues, the scholar felt it was his duty to emphasize the fact that the panel was not only an important historical artefact, but also a work of art that was of significance for the history of painting. Earlier, the portrait of Rudolph IV had been

⁸⁰ Perkinson, *The Likeness of the King*, 1-18.

⁸¹ 'Wir haben hier nur über die technisch-materielle Beschaffenheit des Bildes berichtet. Hoffentlich wird seine Neuausstellung in Dom- und Diözesanmuseum Anlaß geben, auch seine kunstgeschichtliche Bedeutung eingehender als bisher zu untersuchen. Denn diese Bedeutung wird, so scheint uns, keineswegs bloß von den Tatsachen bestimmt, daß die Tafel das älteste selbstständige Bildnis der deutschen Kunst und ein allein dastehendes Denkmal österreichischer Tafelmalerei aus den Sechzigerjahren des 14. Jahrhunderts ist', Johannes Wilde, 'Das Bildnis Herzog Rudolfs IV', *Kirchenkunst. Österreichische Zeitschrift für Pflege religiöser Kunst*, 5, 1933, 41.

known mainly from popular reproductions and had functioned in the collective imagination of Austrians more as a historical memento than as a work of art. In his guidebook to Vienna, published in 1770, Matthias Fuhrman (1697–1773), general of the Austrian province of the Paulines, devoted a separate chapter to the portrait, regarding it as a ‘special monument’ commemorating the person of the first Austrian ruler to have held the archducal title, who was called ‘the founder’, since he had founded many churches and religious houses, and had contributed to establishing the chapter house at St Stephen’s cathedral consisting of twenty four canons.⁸² Next to a detailed description of the painting, the book featured also its reproduction accompanied by a meaningful caption, reading, ‘Wahre Abbildung Rudolph des Vierten Erzherzogs zu Oesterreich, Stifters des hohen Domstifts bey St. Stephan in Wien’ (The true image of Rudolph the Fourth, Archduke of Austria, founder of the princely-bishopric cathedral chapter at St Stephen’s in Vienna, fig. 10.) The panel, then, is considered here as a valuable documentary source from the past, which records the likeness of the Austrian archduke, a fact that was emphasized in all nineteenth-century publications. The majority of the graphic images of the archduke from that time did not follow closely the Vienna picture; they were rather its free interpretations. There occur, however, rare examples of the panel’s faithful reproduction, just like the one published in the second edition of the monumental *History of Vienna* by Karl Weiß, from 1880.⁸³



Figure 10 Reproduction of the portrait of Rudolph IV, Mathias Fuhrmann, *Historische Beschreibung und kurz gefaßte Nachricht von der Roemisch-Kaiserl. und Koeniglichen Residenzstadt Wien und ihren Vorstaedten*, Wien, 1770, 425.

⁸² Mathias Fuhrmann, *Historische Beschreibung und kurz gefaßte Nachricht von der Roemisch-Kaiserl. und Koeniglichen Residenzstadt Wien und ihren Vorstaedten*, Wien, 1770, 425–428.

⁸³ Karl Weiß, *Geschichte der Stadt Wien*, vol. 1, Wien, 1880 (2nd edn), 180–181.

Relocating the painting in 1933 to the newly established cathedral museum and submitting it to technical examination (which included such advanced procedures as radiography, a pioneering method at that time) meant therefore not only that a little-known painting was brought to light, but rather that it started to widely circulate in art-historical scholarship, in a particular context of the development of German painting. It should be further emphasized that Wilde characterized the 'portrait qualities' of the Vienna picture with utmost caution. In his monograph on a panel portrait of Sigismund of Luxembourg from the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, published three years earlier, he made a reference also to the portrait of Rudolph. He saw in it not so much traits of mimetic similitude, but rather a distinct physiognomic type, popular in contemporaneous painting in Bohemia ('[...] das Porträtliche ganz hinter dem stilbedingten Typus zurücktritt').⁸⁴ Therefore, the importance that the author ascribed to the painting did not result from its 'portrait-like' realism, but from its novel and unprecedented form of representation: an independent panel depicting the head and shoulders of the figure, a model generally associated with early modern and not medieval art. While emphasizing the independence of Rudolph's painted portrait, Wilde situated it in a group of autonomous portraits of rulers to which he also assigned the sculpted busts in the triforia of Prague Cathedral and the panel portrait of Sigismund of Luxembourg. The portrait of Rudolph IV appeared in this context as the oldest surviving example of an autonomous, late-medieval image of a ruler ('spätmittelalterliches Fürstenbildnis'), a specific artistic genre that disappeared around the mid-fifteenth century, to give way to the new, 'burgher', kind of portrait ('Bürgerbildnis'), which originated in the Netherlands.⁸⁵ The argument of Wilde – an experienced scholar who assigned an equal measure of attention to style and the technological aspects of the analyzed works – is far from generalizations and hasty judgements. Nevertheless, it reflects the line of thought that was typical of twentieth-century historiography, in which a single work of art was supposed to be associated with a broader group of similar works of art and represent a particular moment in the history of art. Paintings analyzed in this way are always seen as either 'early', 'mature' or 'late' examples of a selection of artworks chosen by the researcher – a group cut out of the whole in order to outline a given artistic phenomenon rooted in chronology.

All of this tells us more about eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth-century interests than those of makers of the panel and its original audience. To understand better the impact that the painting could have in the fourteenth century it is necessary to turn to the work itself. The portrait is painted in tempera on ungrounded parchment mounted and expanded on a pine panel and measures merely 45 by 30 centimetre including the original frame. The panel's modest dimensions and frame that does not bear any traces of hinges suggest its portable character. It depicts the head and fragment of the shoulders of Rudolph IV, whose identity is confirmed by the black gothic-type inscription written on the frame. His head is

⁸⁴ Johannes Wilde, 'Ein Zeitgenössisches Bildnis des Kaisers Sigismund', *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien*, N.F., 4, 1930, 221.

⁸⁵ Wilde, 'Ein Zeitgenössisches Bildnis', 221–222.

shown against a dark background in half-profile and appears as shaded from dark to light by a painter. The half-opened mouth, silky hair, jaw-line beard and long eyelashes indicate that the picture wants to present us not so much with an image of an ideal ruler – as was the case of portraits of Casimir the Great – but rather with an attractive young prince shown in a manner as lively as possible.⁸⁶ The title employed in the panel's inscription – *Archidux* – and a characteristic headgear shown on Rudolph's head, the so-called 'Erzherzogshut', are anything but common. In fact, they had been invented by Rudolph together with the so called *Privilegium maius*, forged privileges issued by his chancellery in order to strengthen the position of Austria and the Habsburgs in the Holy Roman Empire. The same headgear and similar countenance of a young prince with half-opened mouth appear on other images of Rudolph created during his lifetime and placed in St. Stephen's, a church considered by the Archduke not only a main parish church of the city of Vienna, but also the religious centre of his duchy, a collegiate with chapter established by Rudolph himself, and a church of the university he himself founded. These images are three groups of statues of him and his wife, Catherine of Luxembourg, of which one was once placed on the façade of the church and two in the jambs of portals leading to its nave, the so called *Bischofstor* and *Singertor*. If, as Michael Viktor Schwarz has recently pointed out, these statues reached a wide audience in the public space around St. Stephen's displaying Rudolph's magnificence and presented him as the founder of the church, the painted panel must have been intended for another group of spectators.⁸⁷ In the mid-fifteenth century the portrait was mentioned in the *Chronica Austriae* by Thomas Ebendorfer, a historian and canon of All Saint's Chapter at St. Stephen's, who wrote that he saw Rudolph's features 'in painting not far from his tomb'.⁸⁸ In the seventeenth century, another canon of the same chapter stated that the panel hung on the south wall of its middle choir apse, under the epigraphic epitaph of Frederic, Rudolph's younger brother who died prematurely in 1362.⁸⁹ The record in Ebendorfer's *Chronicle* was written about a hundred years after Rudolph's untimely death, so debate about the portrait's primary function is highly hypothetical. Nevertheless, the fact that after Rudolph's death the portrait was placed in St. Stephen's choir as a reminder of the Archduke and became part of a tradition that maintained the posthumous memory of his foundation activities makes it likely that the panel never left Vienna and from the very beginning was to be displayed in the church. Schwarz seems to be right assuming that the portrait was used in an intimate manner by members of St.

⁸⁶ For the most recent treatment of the portrait see: Michael Viktor Schwarz, 'Magnificence and Innovation. Rudolph IV in Imagery', in Heidrun Rosenberg, ed., *Wien 1365. Creating a University*, Vienna: Brandstätter Verlag, 2015, 28–41.

⁸⁷ Schwarz, 'Magnificence and Innovation', 37.

⁸⁸ Thomas Ebendorfer, *Chronica Austriae*, Berlin-Zurich 1967 (Scriptores rerum Germanicarum, Nova Series, vol. 13), 289.

⁸⁹ Johann Mathias Testarello della Massa, 'Kurze doch Eigentliche Beschreibung darinnen gründlich angeführt wird auf was weisse die kayserliche Residenz: vnd hauptsatt Wienn in Osterreich Anfänglich zum christlichen Glauben bekkert (1685)', *Wiener Dombauvereins-blatt*, year 9, no. 1 (2 series), 1889, 6.

Stephen's clergy, the canons of the All Saints' Chapter and members of the university who were obliged to pay memorial homage to the Archduke.⁹⁰ As such, the panel could remain hidden during the year and was displayed only when needed, for example for services said in St. Stephen's for salvation of Rudolph and his family members' souls. Thus, not unlike the portrait of Anne Jagiellon mentioned at the beginning of this essay, Rudolph's panel perfectly fulfilled the words of Leon Battista Alberti. It imparted his presence within the church he founded, that is, it literally made him present when he was absent. The lively countenance of Rudolph, depicted as if he was speaking, along with the positioning of his head, shown in strong shading *en trois quarts* was surly to enhance the impression of the Archduke's physical presence within the fictional space of the picture. One might rightfully say that the panel's impact was dependent not just upon lifelikeness but also on liveliness. Its painter was to be at pains to breathe life into his sitter using all pictorial means available to him at the time. In so doing he might appear to us astonishingly 'modern', as a matter of fact, however, he most likely fulfilled the demand made of him by a contemporary audience. Virtually at the same time in which the portrait was created Tilemann Elhen von Wolfhagen noted in his *Limburger Chronik* that the best painter in the German lands, a certain Wilhelm from Cologne, was praised by the masters, for he painted the images of men as if they were alive ('he malte einen iglichen menschen von aller gestalt, als hette ez gelebet').⁹¹

The problem broadly delineated in the title of this set of papers has aroused the particular interest of researches in the humanities in recent years. Yet, in spite of the abundance of new works, there is still much to be done, and one of the primary research objectives would be, in our view, to make use of the evidence from East-Central Europe. The majority of scholars have still restricted their research to the area of the former Carolingian Empire, with the exception of the Kingdom of Bohemia within the borders from the period of Luxembourg rule. Both general studies and analytical treatments almost without exception leave out material from the vast areas of the Kingdoms of Hungary and Poland, as well as from countries dominated by Orthodox culture. As a result – and even contrary to the authors' intentions – the nationalist resentments propagated by the German-speaking art historians shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War are coming to the fore. Certainly, a discourse with racist overtones, inspired by the notorious works of Wilhelm Worringer⁹², Karl Oettinger⁹³ or Dagobert Frey⁹⁴, is now out of question.

⁹⁰ Schwarz, 'Magnificence and Innovation', 41.

⁹¹ Arthur Wyss, ed., *Die Limburger Chronik des Tilemann Elhen von Wolfhagen* (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Deutsche Chroniken, IV, I), Hannover: Hanh, 1883, 75.

⁹² Wilhelm Worringer, *Anfänge der Tafelmalerei*, Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1924.

⁹³ Karl Oettinger, 'Altböhmische Malerei', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 6, 1937, 397–406; see Milena Bartlová, 'Takzvané slovanské rysy českého středověkého malířství z hlediska

And it would be unfair to blame only one party. Tendencies that were manifested at the 12th International Congress of Art History in Stockholm in 1933 – an important forum for discussion on the geography of art, where representatives of small countries demonstrated their views on the independence of ‘national’ art – seem to be still alive in Slavic countries.⁹⁵ As an example one can cite the presentation of Václav Štech who proposed a new term, ‘rusticalisation’, to be used for describing stylistic transformation in Czech art, which he defined as ‘folkisation’, that is, assimilating foreign influences and elements of the high culture to the national (folk) spirit.⁹⁶ Furthermore, the stereotypes of the fecundity of Europe’s western part and the cultural imitateness or even passiveness of the Continent’s eastern regions, are still alive (with the exception of the fashion for Russia, which has been en vogue since the nineteenth century). Moreover, the consequences of the post-war political order in Europe can still be felt and the retardation of countries from the former communist block is discernible for example in their persistent attachment to national languages in scholarly publications.

The following papers are a result of a conference held at the Institute of Art History of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow in April 16th-18th, 2015. The organizers’ intention was not to develop a comprehensive discussion that would cover all issues related to this wide-ranging subject, rather it was to deepen the research made thus far on specific topics and to shed light on works of art that are rarely considered while discussing the issue of the origins of early modern portraiture. The intellectually sophisticated strategies of picturing an individual, in which the realistic rendering of facial features becomes an important complement to the traditional modes of representation such as material symbolism, heraldry or inscriptions, are addressed by Pierre Yves Le Pogam (Louvre, Paris) and Katharina Weiger (Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence – Max Planck Institut) in their papers published in the present volume. They deal with the visual propaganda of King of France Louis IX and King of Naples Robert of Anjou, concentrating on their role in the process of shaping their portrayed likenesses, a problem that has hitherto been addressed only marginally in scholarship. In a similar vein, Mateusz Grzęda (Jagiellonian University, Cracow) attempts to reinterpret the images of Kuno von Falkenstein, Archbishop of Trier, based on contemporary literary accounts of his person and character.

The increasing role played by individual physiognomy in late medieval commemorations of the dead is emphasized by Javier Martínez de Aguirre (Universidad Complutense de Madrid) who discusses the phenomenon of enriching

rasismu a Marxismu-Leninismu’, in Milena Bartlová, *Nasše, národní umění. Studie z dějepisů umění*, Brno: Barrister & Principal, 2009, 29.

⁹⁴ Dagobert Frey, ‘Entwicklung nationaler Stile in der mittelalterlichen Kunst des Abendlandes’, *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 16, 1938, 1–74.

⁹⁵ Beatr Störckuhl, ‘Historia sztuki w służbie “niemieckich badań wschodnich” (Ostforschung)’ [Art History at the service of German ‘Ostforschung’], *Rocznik Historii Sztuki*, 26, 2001, 34.

⁹⁶ Václav Vilém Štech, *Pod povrchem tvarů*, Praha: Václav Petr, 1941, 20–26.

individuality in the *gisant* figures of Spanish sepulchral sculpture at the turn of the sixteenth century, while Jakov Đorđević (University of Belgrade) analyses how the representation of the individual is complicated in the form of *transi* tombs, with particular attention to the tomb of Antonio Amati in the Florentine church of Santa Trinità. Krzysztof Czyżewski (Wawel Castle, Cracow) and Marek Walczak (Jagiellonian University, Cracow) have dedicated their text to a particular group of portraits of Cracow bishops in the cloisters of the city's Franciscan friary. Drawing attention to the commemorative function of this gallery, initiated in the 1430s and an ongoing project, they have comparatively examined the oldest portraits depicting the friary's founder, Zbigniew Oleśnicki (bishop 1423–1455), while addressing issues that arise from the continuity of the project and its impact on the concept of portrayal (portrait as a tool in creating a historical tradition).

The ambiguities inherent in certain late medieval and Renaissance portraits are paralleled with the methodological practices towards early portraiture in the next set of papers. Marek Walczak presents an interesting letter of indulgence for All Saints' Church in Cracow, executed in 1449 and illustrated with the likeness of the bishop of Cracow, Cardinal Zbigniew Oleśnicki. An iconographic analysis of the document has revealed its close relationship with the tradition of representing Church authority in art. The author further demonstrates the importance of portraits in Church propaganda in the period following the great universal councils of the first half of the fifteenth century. Philipp Zitzlsperger (Hochschule Fresenius/Humboldt-Universität, Berlin) carries out an analysis of the self-portraits of Albrecht Dürer and Anton Pilgram in which the well-known motif of the artist casting himself in the guise of God the Creator has been connected with a reflection on the subject of his profession, the work of these artists seen to evoke the order of the world, constructed according the rules of geometry and justice as originating from God.

The authors of the next two papers concentrated their attention on the different complexities linked with the multiplicity of meanings embodied in the nature of the portrait. Alexander Lee (Warwick University) asks how seemingly imperceptible attributes of character are revealed with reference to Antique literary *topoi* in the writings and poetry of Petrarch. Mary Hogan Camp (The Morgan Library, New York) focuses her analysis on Pontormo's stately portrait of Cosimo il Vecchio Medici, in which she observes how the limits of Renaissance portrait formulas have been expanded. She draws attention to the painting's composition, and particularly to the inscribed banderol entangled amidst apple branches, signalling the polyvalent connotations of this element which introduces a highly personal interpretation for Cosimo's immediate progeny.

Moving more firmly into the Renaissance, the next group of papers seek to reconsider the hitherto formulaic interpretation of the painted visage during this period of pronounced visual codification. Albert Godycki (Courtauld Institute of Art, London) centres his contribution on the portraits of Jan van Scorel. Departing from Alois Riegl's privileging interpretation of Scorel's portraits, the paper examines the sources and concepts underpinning their construction, their place in the humanist culture of the sixteenth-century Netherlands and the possible impact they may have had on the understanding of portraiture in the following century.

The paper of Masza Sitek (Jagiellonian University, Cracow) is a critical revision of established views on the concept of portraiture and identity in the painted oeuvre of Hans Süss von Kulmbach. Her paper utilizes results from recent conservation studies carried out on the group of panel paintings by the Nuremberg artist held in St Mary's Church in Cracow, a project funded by the John Paul Getty Foundation in the framework of their Panel Painting Project.

Mateusz Grzęda received his PhD in Art History from the Jagiellonian University in Cracow in 2014 and since 2017 has been assistant professor at the Institute of Art History of the same University. Historian of medieval art, his research concentrates on portraiture and representation in the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance with special focus on Central Europe. His book about the origins of portraiture in Late Medieval Central Europe is about to be printed.

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